



The Bethlehem STAR

February 2023



Now that Christmas is over, we are in the church season of the time after Epiphany. We will remain in this season until the middle of this month when we reach Transfiguration and Ash Wednesday. One of the things that I love about Epiphany is how it is all about focusing on the things that point us to Jesus. The star that the magi followed pointed them to Jesus. The witness of John and his baptizing Jesus points to the extraordinary things God was doing through Jesus. Epiphany is all about signs that point to God's love through Christ and what that means for us and for the world. Epiphany reminds us that Jesus coming into the world showed the depths of God's great love for us. Epiphany also encourages us to go out into the world and share that amazing truth with the world through our discipleship.

There are many other ways that we can see and live into what Epiphany has to teach us about God, God's promises, and our role in sharing this good news. One of these opportunities is facing us here at Bethlehem right now. Bethlehem is in partnership with 4 other area churches to assist people who are seeking legal asylum coming to the United States. This group, called WELCOME, began hosting a family of 4 from Nicaragua the week before Christmas. The timing of this could not have been better. As we were preparing to welcome Christ in the season of Christmas, we were also preparing to welcome this family.

Many amazing things have happened since that Sunday morning when this family arrived at the Minneapolis airport. Housing has been found for this family and is being prepared for them to move in, the children are getting prepared for school and daycare, the adults are beginning ELL classes, and too many other things to write about here.

Now WELCOME also needs your help. There are several needs that we have right now for this family. At the time of my writing this article, we are in need of people to help with transportation for the family to and from school, appointments, and so forth. You do not need to speak Spanish to be a driver — we are putting together a list of translators and interpreters. WELCOME is also accepting donations of gift cards and cash to assist the family with paying for rent and other necessities. If paying by check, please write the check out to Christ the King Lutheran and write "WELCOME" in the memo line. We will continue to let you know of additional opportunities to support the family as need arises.

Thank you for all of the ways you all help to shine a light that points to the love of Christ in the world. Thank you for loving your neighbors in such fierce and bold ways. Thank you for helping to share the gospel of God's love with the world. Happy Epiphany, Bethlehem! ~ Pr. Jacie



Join Us For Wednesday Night Suppers!

JD Truffles Catering will prepare a variety of delicious weekly meals, and Bethlehem volunteers will greet and serve you. **All are welcome!**
Join us between 5:00 and 6:15 p.m.

February 1

Grilled chicken with bun, chips, side of vegetables

February 8

Meat loaf, mashed potatoes, corn

February 15

Ham, mashed potatoes, vegetable

February 22

Spaghetti & meatballs, garlic toast, salad

Free will donations are welcomed to cover supper expenses.

There's no place like **CAMP!**
Support BLC Youth at our
S'MORE FUNDRAISER

After worship on
Sunday, January 29th
Wednesday, February 1st
\$3 suggested donation

We need radio broadcast sponsors for 2023!
Please call, e-mail, or stop by the office to sign up.
Broadcasts are \$100 each.





Monthly Mission



Notes from the Community & Global Missions Board



Green Lake Lutheran Ministries (GLLM) has been a part of our Bethlehem fabric for many years. Many of us have sent our children to the beautiful shores of Green Lake in Spicer, MN, to experience this important ministry. Green

Lake's mission is "To invite all to experience the life-changing love of Jesus through vibrant settings in community and creation." The ministry celebrates everyone to let you be who you are.

Who is this YOU? We welcome you – your race, ethnicity, and cultural background. We welcome you – your unique physical and mental abilities. We welcome you – your sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, including all members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

We welcome you – your religion, your faith, and wherever you are in your believing and unbelief. We welcome you – your generation, political affiliation, and socio-economic status. Please consider supporting this very important ministry for our youth to develop their spiritual life and learning. Our goal is \$1,000.



Adult Forum Schedule 10:45 a.m. In Grounds for Joy

February 5: LSS & The Reach,
with Tammy Moses & Tasha Moulton

February 12: Guardianship & Conservatorship Planning,
with Shannon Butler

February 19: Mankato Reconciliation & Diversity
Initiatives, with Mohammed Alsadig from the
Mankato Diversity Council

February 26: NO FORUM



Council Corner



Highlights from the Monthly Council Mtg.

Here are the "highlights" of the Bethlehem Council meeting held on **January 17**. Meeting minutes with details posted at www.blcmankato.org and also available in the church office notebook. Visit with Council members with questions and concerns! We welcome your conversation & feedback!

Financial Report: 2022 ended on a positive note with a general fund balance of **\$14,000+** due to continued member generosity. This balance will be held in savings to be used during future deficit situations. Thank you for your support! Major mortgage principal payments will be made as capital campaign pledges are fulfilled. Major benchmarks in mortgage reduction will be celebrated.

2022-26 BLC Strategic Plan: Major BLC boards/committees and individuals have been identified for addressing the 5 goals and 37 supporting objectives & practices during the next 5 years. Plan will be posted on the BLC website for member review. Plan on hearing more about the BLC strategies for moving forward as a church and in our community.

2021 Financial Review: Report from Financial Review Committee approved for 2021. No issues of financial concern reported. 2022 review is pending. BLC Finance Committee will address the need for a standardized report form that identifies the key elements to be covered in future reviews.

Refugee/Asylum Seeker Resettlement: WELCOME community 5-church efforts continue to support the first refugee family from Nicaragua now relocated in Mankato. BLC Endowment Board approved \$1,250 assistance. Financial assistance is needed for gift cards, transportation & cash-paying jobs. BLC members can contact Pr. Jacie for more details and how you can help!

Personnel Committee: New staff orientation guide established to facilitate the addition of new BLC lay staff employees once hired. This identifies key meetings to be held and information provided. Performance reviews being conducted for Congregational Services Coordinator, weekend janitors and nursery attendant.

Youth Events: BLC Youth Board & Pr. Jacie planning regular youth events starting in March.

RIC Sunday: Sunday, January 29 will be celebrated as Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Sunday during worship service.

Fat Tuesday Contributions: Council members will provide financial support for the Fat Tuesday youth fundraising project on February 21. Thrivent Action Grant of \$250 approved to support this BLC project.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, February 21.



Financial Report



Elizabeth Ruiz, Financial Secretary

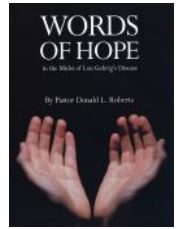
The year 2022 ended with very good news. Member giving was 99% of budget. Expenses over the year were well within budget. At the end of the year, the general fund had a surplus balance of \$14,000. These funds will be held in savings to be used during any deficit situations during 2023. The new year will start with a general fund balance of \$0. Offering envelopes are available in the narthex. Please take a packet if you are an envelope user. If you need a packet sent to you, please contact the church office.



Bethlehem offers taxi service for members who are not able to drive themselves to and from church. Rides are available for Sunday worship services only. Please call WS one day before and tell them that it is for Bethlehem Lutheran Church. You will be asked to sign a voucher, and the church will be billed.

Pastor Don's Devotion

Pastor Don Roberts served as pastor at Bethlehem from 1989-1996. He was diagnosed with ALS/Lou Gehrig's disease in 1995 and continues to be an inspiration of life and faith to our congregation.



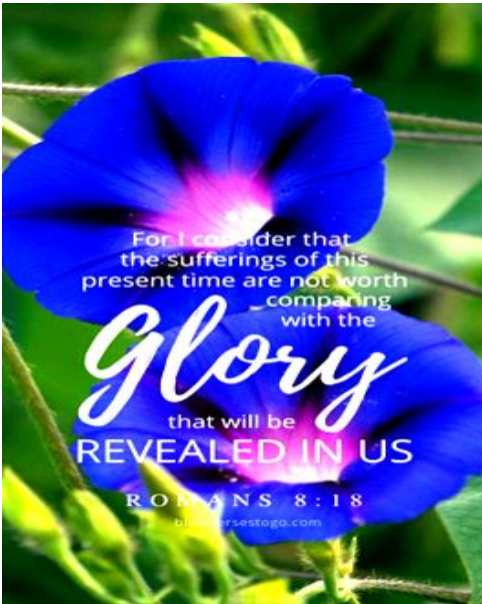
I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.
~ Romans 8:18

We have all suffered in some way. Maybe it is a job we do not like. Maybe it is a breakup or a divorce. Maybe it is a death or a disease. Maybe it is guilt, or something else. In the context of this verse, the early Christians were persecuted for their faith. Paul wrote of "the glory about to be revealed to us" in hope.

Jesus died to forgive our sins and guilt. On the third day, he rose again. No matter what we may face in this life, Jesus, in his resurrection, guarantees us a better future. Whatever we may face in this life, we have a light at the end of the tunnel. It is eternal life with Jesus and with one another.

We do not have to wait for eternal life. We can, in this life, have a relationship with Jesus. In baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings us into a relationship with Jesus. Jesus gives us strength and hope in our sufferings. There is a light at the end of the tunnel, but Jesus walks with us through the tunnel.

Thanks be to God!



Family Faith Formation Updates

Anna Wencil, Family Faith Formation Director



FAT TUESDAY

DINNER & SILENT AUCTION

FEBRUARY 21ST | 5:30-7 PM

ALL PROCEEDS
SUPPORT FUTURE
YOUTH TRIPS

PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE AT
BLCMANKATO.ORG/YOUTH
IN-PERSON DINING OR CARRY-OUT
\$10 FOR YOUTH & ADULTS
KIDS 5 & UNDER EAT FREE



FAT TUESDAY

SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS



DROP OFF ITEMS BY
SUNDAY, FEB. 5TH
IN THE MAIN OFFICE

THANK YOU! ALL PROCEEDS
SUPPORT FUTURE YOUTH TRIPS.

FAMILY SKATING NIGHT



Sat., February 18th

5-6:30 PM

All Season's Arena

Join us for a night on the ice as we rent out the rink for our BLC families with kids. Older siblings are invited to join, too. Parental supervision is needed. Skate rental, walkers, and snacks included. No need to sign up ahead. Just show up!



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ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 418
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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*A Reconciling in Christ
Congregation*

Pastor Jay Dahlvang: (507) 469-3792
pastorjay@blcmankato.org

Pastor Jacie Richmond: (612) 581-8855
pastorjacie@blcmankato.org



@bethlehem.mankato



Church Calendar – Winter 2023



Worship

Sunday, 9:30 a.m.
in sanctuary & online

Wednesday, 6:15 p.m.

Our Sunday service is
streamed live on
Facebook & YouTube
and broadcast
on KTOE Radio
at 11 a.m.

Education

Please check Family
Faith Formation on
our website for details
about children's/
youth activities.

See the Adult Forum
schedule on page 2.



Tuesday, 7 a.m.
Lectionary online

**Wednesday at
10:30 a.m. in
Grounds for Joy**

Small Groups

Music rehearsals,
book clubs,
social groups,
boards/
committees, etc.

Please check online
calendar for times
& places.

**Fellowship
With Food**

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.
Join us for
coffee & treats
in Grounds for Joy
after worship.

**Wednesday Night
Suppers** are served
from 5-6:15 p.m.

All calendar details can be found on the website at blcmankato.org/calendar.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

*Bethlehem is an inviting community
that is growing in Christ, loving our
neighbors, and serving God's world.*

The deadline for submitting
newsletter articles is the 15th
of each month.



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

**KNITTERS and
CROCHETERS —
PRAYER SHAWL MAKERS**

These still winter months are a great time for quiet knitting and crocheting to replenish the supply of BLC prayer shawls. Bundles of soft, new yarn (not Homespun) with patterns/instructions for prayer shawls are available in the office. **BE A PRAYER SHAWL MAKER!** Contact Marcia Nagel (507-420-9692) or Kathy Crosswell (507-388-2002) for more information. Knitting lessons available. Crochet teachers wanted.